

FAQ on Indiana Title I Preschools



Selection of Students

How can students be selected for participation in a Title-I funded preschool program?

How students are selected will depend on a variety of factors, such as whether or not the program will be school-based or districtwide, if the school is a schoolwide program or Targeted Assistance School (TAS), what funding and building capacity exists to house a preschool program.

If a program is school-based, how student selection will depend on the Title I model. In a schoolwide program, all preschool students who would be expected to enroll in kindergarten are eligible. In a TAS, or in a schoolwide program with limited capacity, a student selection process will need to be implemented (i.e., students should be selected based on academic need, as determined by multiple, educationally related criteria such as teacher judgment, parent interviews and developmentally appropriate measures of child development). A preschool screening tool could be used to identify most at-risk students.

In a districtwide preschool model, the pool of eligible students will come from participating Title I schools. If all schools are schoolwide and capacity exists, all students from Title I participating schools could attend. In the likely event that not all schools are schoolwide or that capacity does not exist, students should be selected based on academic need, as determined by multiple, educationally related criteria such as teacher judgment, parent interviews and developmentally appropriate measures of child development. Some children are automatically eligible:

- Children who participated in Head Start or a Title I preschool program at any time in the prior two years;
- Children who received services under Part C of Title I (migrant education) in the prior two years;
- Homeless preschool-age children; and
- Children who are in a local institution for neglected or delinquent children and youth, or attending a community-day program.

Are LEAs or schools required by Title I to test preschool children?

No. Under Title I, third grade is the earliest grade at which children must be tested. However, the more that teachers know about children's academic, social, and emotional development, the more able they are to meet those children's needs. Therefore, the Secretary recommends that LEAs and schools develop age-appropriate screening and assessment measures to assist

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with individualizing instruction so that all Title I preschool students develop a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy. In addition, through initial screening and by checking the children's progress, teachers and schools can identify those children who need special help or who face extra challenges.

Screenings and assessments for preschool children do not imply the use of paper- and-pencil, and large-group assessments, which are not allowed below the third grade in some States. Rather, appropriate assessments for preschool children include individually administered standardized assessments, observational checklists completed by teachers while students play, or an analysis of student work. The information gleaned from these types of assessments should then be used to make informed decisions about instruction and enhance teaching and learning, rather than to make judgments regarding the efficacy of a school or a system.

When choosing a screening or assessment tool, LEAs and schools should ensure that it has been validated for its intended purpose and population. For example, it is not appropriate to use a first-grade skills assessment for screening or assessing a preschool-age child.

What preschool screening or assessment tools are commonly used?

Many schools report using ISTAR-KR (<http://www.doe.in.gov/assessment/istar-kr>), teacher based assessments, Brigance Preschool II Assessment or Brigance Early Childhood, PPVT-R, High Scope, Scholastic Big Day PK Program to screen or assess preschool students.

Can a family's income be the indicator for participation?

Students should be selected based on academic need, as determined by multiple, educationally related criteria such as teacher judgment, parent interviews and developmentally appropriate measures of child development. A family's socio-economic status may be one factor considered for participation in the program but cannot be the sole determination.

Can a district serve preschool students from outside their district boundaries?

Title I funds are generated for a district based on students that reside within it. A district could develop a model where non-eligible students or students from outside the district may pay tuition to attend the program.

Can our district charge parents for participation in a preschool program?

Parent pay may be considered for parents of non-eligible Title I children.